

VZCZCXRO5082  
PP RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEHSB #0075/01 0341210  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 031210Z FEB 10  
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5367  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 3406  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 0024  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2566  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000075

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR BWALCH  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR MGA VIN  
ALGIERS FOR POLITICAL/ECONOMIC SECTION

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/03/2020  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#) [AG](#)  
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR TO ZIMBABWE

Classified By: Ambassador Charles A. Ray for reasons 1.4 (b) (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: According to the newly arrived Algerian Ambassador to Zimbabwe, the country is currently in the midst of three transitions: the internal transformation of ZANU-PF, the transitional coalition government, and an economic transition. If these transitions, especially the overall political situation, take too long it will give hard line extremists time to become entrenched. Externally and internally the focus needs to be shifted from individuals to building institutions. It is important that a graceful exit be arranged for ZANU-PF leader Mugabe, but it will be complicated by the inner circle of his advisors and by his own ego. The recent election of Zimbabwe to the Peace and Security Organ of the AU, which is being hyped in the state-controlled press, is not as significant as ZANU-PF is trying to portray it. It was merely Zimbabwe's turn in the regional rotation, and no one wanted to vote against them. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Lazhar Soualem, newly-arrived Algerian Ambassador to Zimbabwe, paid a courtesy call on Ambassador on February 1. Soualem has served for many years in the multi-lateral affairs division of the Algerian Foreign Ministry, dealing with African affairs. He said he met with Zimbabwean President Mugabe just before he came to Harare, and this helped to smooth his arrival and presentation of credentials. Algeria and Zimbabwe have a historically friendly relationship, but he has been instructed to observe events here very carefully for any signs that the instability of Zimbabwe is spreading to neighboring countries. The so-called land reform program, for instance, is being watched in Namibia and South Africa, and there are already some signs that those countries are contemplating similar moves against land owned by former colonial citizens.

13. (C) Zimbabwe is currently undergoing transitions in three areas:

- a. There is the transformation going on inside ZANU-PF as young party members seek to move up into positions of authority. Arrayed against them are ideologically motivated extremists who want a return to revolutionary times.
- b. The political transition being undertaken by the ZANU-MDC coalition government.
- c. An economic process whereby the country moves from a cash-based economy to one that generates employment and adds

value.

While it is understood that such transformations take time, delaying too long, especially delaying the first two, gives extremists within ZANU-PF time to block reforms and solidify their power bases. It is important that the transition move forward as quickly as it can be accommodated. It is also important that the focus of efforts, both domestically and by the international community, be moved from individuals to the creation of institutions that support democratic government.

¶4. (C) Robert Mugabe has been in power for several decades, and unlike other revolutionary counterparts in the region (ANC and FRELIMO, for instance), he has developed a cult of personality and neglected institution building, leading to ZANU-PF being the only independence movement to lose post-independence elections. In order to advance the cause of post-independence elections. In order to advance the cause of political and economic reform and avert chaos, it is, Soualem said, important to somehow provide a graceful exit from power for Mugabe. This will be complicated by Mugabe's monumental ego -- everything since independence has revolved around him as an individual -- and by the fears of his inner circle of advisors of losing their privileged positions and possible retribution for their past misdeeds. As complicated and difficult as it might be, he said, it is important that regional actors like SADC and the AU take this on.

¶5. (SBU) The Herald, ZANU-PF's official mouthpiece in Harare, recently trumpeted Zimbabwe's election to the Peace and Security Organ of the AU at the summit in Addis Ababa. Soualem said that the propaganda is overblown, and is not of

HARARE 00000075 002 OF 002

as much significance as the Herald claims. These positions are frequently rotated, and for the southern African region, it was Zimbabwe's turn, so no one voted against them. He recognizes, though, that ZANU-PF will make every effort to exploit this as a validation of their position and use it to further stymie progress on the Global Political Agreement. He said he would not normally even report something like this to his government, but given the impact this is likely to have on political reform here, he is contemplating doing so. He candidly said, however, that there is likely nothing in the short term that anyone can do about it.

¶6. (SBU) One of the things that bothered him very early in his tenure here, Soualem said, was the lack of effective communication between African embassies and their European colleagues. He has pushed for a meeting with the EU embassies to get a briefing on the new EU leadership structure, and hopes to leverage this into more frequent meetings to discuss development activities. (COMMENT: This parallels our own efforts to get more coordination not only with the African states, but with countries like China that are active here. END COMMENT.)

RAY